



Watering Guidelines

Cacti and other succulents have an amazing ability to store water and adapt to new environments. Over-watering combined with poorly drained soil is a recipe for these plants to struggle. The soil should dry almost completely between watering cycles. Check the root zone about 2-3 inches below the surface. If the soil is still damp, wait until it is dry before applying more water. Regularly checking the root zone before watering gives you a good idea of what your plants' unique watering needs are. For most native plants, supplemental water is only needed during the summer months.

Common Problems

Other than over watering, typical causes for succulent struggles are freeze damage and sunburn. Exposed plants subjected to freezing temperatures lasting several hours or more, may sustain damage that the plant eventually outgrows. However, severe damage to columnar cacti may cause that part of the plant to die completely. To help protect from the harsh weather, cover the plant with a cotton sheet (never plastic) or cover the tips with Styrofoam cups.

Sunburn can be a problem for transplanted succulents. It usually occurs when the plant is not acclimated to its new environment. It can cause permanent scarring.

To minimize this, make sure the plant is marked for its orientation in the nursery so it can be installed facing the same direction in the new environment. If this is not possible, a shade cloth can also be used over newly-acquired plants to help them adjust to the sunlight



Other Challenges

Succulents suffer and often die from three main sources: soil borne pathogens, insects and animals. Pathogens, mostly fungi, affect succulents in many different ways. Normally you will see brown depressions form at the affected area. In some cases, the affected areas can be treated by a fungicide. If the disease has spread to the point where it is highly noticeable, it is better to remove the cactus before the disease spreads to neighboring plants. Proper watering is the key to preventing the spread of soil borne pathogens.

Proper watering also plays a key role in discouraging insects from damaging succulents. Insects are opportunistic and need moisture to survive. Saturating your soil with water is an open invitation to an insect.

Animals, particularly rabbits and javelina, find some varieties of succulents tasty and can cause significant damage. The best way to prevent animal damage is to limit access to the plants. Install wire mesh around the plant, especially while they are young. Or simply find a different location for your plant.

Source

<http://arizonacactussales.com/care-tips/>

<http://www.cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/az1399.pdf>

